

The Truth about Lunar Sabbaths

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The Bible repeatedly identifies God's people as those who keep the Ten Commandments. What is perhaps the most recognizable of these moral laws is the observance of the Sabbath. The seventh day was sanctified the day after Adam was created, and it has been kept irrespective of the months by God's faithful ever since (Gen. 2:3).

In recent years, a small group of believers have challenged the long-established method of observing the Sabbath. They claim that the seventh day should not be based on the weekly cycle, but rather the monthly lunar cycle should be used to indicate when the Sabbath is observed. They further reason that the new moon should be honored as a type of Sabbath, but such awkward methodology has even caused division among those who observe lunar Sabbaths. Because the Bible does not give any information about observing the new moon, they cannot agree as to how the new moon should be kept.

Some will keep the new moon the same way as the Sabbath by not working. Others believe that goods may not be purchased or sold, but work can be done on the new moon. Even though they believe the first day of the lunar month is the new moon, both sides agree that it is not the first day when counting to their lunar Sabbath. Instead, they consider the day after the new moon the first day of their week. This count continues to cycle through the rest of the month, and resets only after the next new moon.

As a result, lunar Sabbaths always occur on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th days of the month on the Hebrew calendar. Because Hebrew months alternate between 29 and 30 days, there is either one or two days left over during the final week of each month. These extra days are excluded from their seven-day count resulting

in a single eight or nine day week at the end of each month. Then, the day after the next new moon, their seven-day count restarts.

An unusual aspect of this practice is that lunar Sabbaths take place on the same four dates each month. This means that the actual day observed as their weekly Sabbath changes every month. Their Sabbath might fall on every Sunday one month, every Tuesday the next, and every Wednesday the subsequent month. Consider the following chart displaying an example of four consecutive months using the lunar sabbath theory.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1st (day 0) new moon	2nd (day 1)	3rd (day 2)	4th (day 3)	5th (day 4)	6th (day 5)	7th (day 6)
8th (day 7) lunar Sabbath	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th
15th lunar Sabbath	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st
22nd lunar Sabbath	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th
29th lunar Sabbath	30th (skip)	1st (day 0) new moon	2nd (day 1)	3rd (day 2)	4th (day 3)	5th (day 4)
6th (day 5)	7th (day 6)	8th (day 7) lunar Sabbath	9th	10th	11th	12th
13th	14th	15th lunar Sabbath	16th	17th	18th	19th
20th	21st	22nd lunar Sabbath	23rd	24th	25th	26th

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27th	28th	29th lunar Sabbath	1st (day 0) new moon	2nd (day 1)	3rd (day 2)	4th (day 3)
5th (day 4)	6th (day 5)	7th (day 6)	8th (day 7) lunar Sabbath	9th	10th	11th
12th	13th	14th	15 lunar Sabbath	16th	17th	18th
19th	20th	21st	22nd lunar Sabbath	23rd	24th	25th
26th	27th	28th	29th lunar Sabbath	30th (skip)	1st (day 0) new moon	2nd (day 1)
3rd (day 2)	4th (day 3)	5th (day 4)	6th (day 5)	7th (day 6)	8th (day 7) lunar Sabbath	9th
10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th lunar Sabbath	16th
17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd lunar Sabbath	23rd
24th	25th	26th	27th	28th	29th lunar Sabbath	1st (day 0) new moon

Is there any validity to lunar Sabbaths? Did God intend His sanctified seventh day to be calculated according to the new moon, or should it be kept in a sequence of every seven days regardless of when the new moon occurs? What evidence do the Scriptures and history provide?

The First Sabbath

The Sabbath is introduced in the first pages of the Bible. God began the creation week by stating “Let there be light.” This occurred on what He called “the first day” (Gen. 1:3-5). There is no indication of a day that is skipped or not counted when God moved through His six days of labor toward the seventh day. There is also no mention of a new moon on this first day.

When God ultimately sanctified the seventh day, He spoke of the heavens, but never specifically mentioned the moon. He made no connection between the new moon and the seven day cycle that He established. Notice the biblical record:

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens (Genesis 2:1-4).

The completion of the seven-day week ended with the words “This is the history of the heavens and earth when they were created...” In the entire account, there is nothing to indicate that the week began with a new moon, and there is certainly no delay of one or two days before the cycle started.

God’s final act on the seventh day was to institute the Sabbath. It was set apart from the first six days and given to humanity as a sign between the Almighty and His people (Exo. 31:13). The importance of this sacred day is clearly documented, and yet there is not a single word mentioning a relationship between the Sabbath and the moon. In fact, the moon was only mentioned on the fourth day and it was obviously not considered the beginning of a count to the seventh day. As Moses wrote:

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let

them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day (Genesis 1:14-19).

Notice a fundamental point in the verses above. God set the sun, moon, and stars in their respective positions for the purpose of “signs and seasons.” The word “signs” is the Hebrew *oth* meaning a “flag or beacon” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, H226). The Hebrew word for “seasons” is *moed* meaning “an *appointment*, that is, a fixed *time* or season; specifically a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an *assembly...*” (*Strong’s*, H4150).

This unique word explains God’s purpose for positioning the firmament. The sun, moon, and stars were designed to dictate when humanity should observe the annual holy days. Through their individual orbits and positions, mankind was given an astronomical calendar so that God’s people would know when to celebrate His Feasts.

Notice that God set the moon and stars in their place on the fourth day. He did not align the orbit of the moon on the first day, or on some other unnumbered day. If God intended the moon to be an anchor for the Sabbath, He would have set the lights in the firmament before the week began. He would have made it clear that counting to the seventh day must be based upon the position of the moon. And yet we have no such command, and such a proposal is never even implied.

God did not establish the Sabbath based on some secret lunar code. He is not trying to confuse people. He does not expect them to understand that the Sabbath is the seventh day and yet observed on the eighth. God is not the author of confusion (1Cor. 14:33). On the other hand, the lunar Sabbath theory lacks the order and consistency found in the ways of our Creator.

The truth regarding the Almighty's laws is always plain and clear. If it were His intention to bind the Sabbath to the position of the moon, God would have stated such an important point in these very first verses of the Bible. He would have started the count to His chosen day after the fourth day when He positioned the moon's orbit for holy day observances.

Despite these truths, lunar Sabbath keepers have gone so far as to call the seven-day weekly cycle a "Jewish invention." As the Scriptures continually make it clear, the seven-day week was not designed by the tribe of Judah. Instead, it was created by God and documented in the very first pages of the Bible.

The Sabbath Reintroduced

God considers patriarchs such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph as faithful (Gen. 26:5; Heb. 11:1-22). This means that these people kept God's Commandments—including the Sabbath. Sometime after the children of Israel moved to Egypt, their observance of God's Commandments was lost. For this reason, God had to reintroduce His laws to them. After leaving Egypt, the Eternal stated that the seventh day Sabbath would be a test of Israel's faithfulness. Notice the historical narrative:

And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt... Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be **on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.**" ...And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. Then he said to them, "This *is what* the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow *is* a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake *today*, and boil

what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’ “So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today *is* a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none. And the LORD said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore **He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days.** Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day (Exodus 16:1-30).

God’s vital Sabbath instructions given to Israel do not contain a single reference to the new moon. Further, there is no indication that the moon was to be used for determining when the seventh day Sabbath occurred. Instead, God used manna as the decisive factor. The Israelites gathered manna for six days. On the sixth day the Almighty gave them “twice as much.” On the seventh there was none. The double portion of manna on the sixth day concluding with nothing raining down on the seventh day was the only way they could affirm which day was the Sabbath—and again—God never mentioned the moon.

In addition, Israel entered the Wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the second month (Exo. 16:1). God instructed them to begin gathering manna the following day. This means that the Eternal began His Sabbath test during the third week of the month on the 16th. He did not start the lesson anywhere near the new moon which would have occurred at the beginning of the month. For more on the timing of this event, see the sub header—*The 15th and the Manna.*

Six Days You Shall Labor

The most important point explaining that the Sabbath is not dependent on the moon is the fact that the Scriptures NEVER say such a thing. There is not a single verse in the Bible telling people to count to the Sabbath beginning the day after a new moon. This alone should make Sabbath keepers distrustful of lunar Sabbaths.

On the other hand, the Scriptures spend considerable time detailing exactly how and when the Sabbath is to be kept. Consider the unambiguous command declared by God:

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Exodus 20:9-11).

The fourth commandment plainly states that God's people are to work for six days and every seventh day is the Sabbath. There is no mention of extra days in between, or a monthly observance of the new moon. In fact, the moon is not mentioned.

When a lunar cycle is used to determine the seventh day, there can only be four Sabbaths in each month. This takes 28 days. As a consequence of their calculation, one or two days are left over at the end of each month. Those who advocate keeping the Sabbath according to the lunar cycle must avoid counting these extra days. Their solution is to claim that it is God's command to disregard them. But where is the command? There is not a single Scripture anywhere in the Bible advocating the practice of observing lunar Sabbaths.

Instead of being God's decree, lunar Sabbaths actually ignore God's command that we are to work for six days and then rest every seventh day. The lunar Sabbath theory allows for seven or eight consecutive days between months before the next Sabbath

arrives. In truth, the Fourth Commandment must be violated in order to observe lunar Sabbaths.

Did God Institute a Day Zero?

The day of a new moon has always been the first day of every month. However, the primary principle on which lunar Sabbaths is based is to consider the new moon as day zero. The day after the new moon is naturally the second day of the month, but they consider this second day as the first day in their count. Their system means that the Sabbath actually begins on the eighth day of every month.

This awkward method alone makes all lunar Sabbath arguments preposterous. How perplexing would it be if God had commanded His people to keep the seventh day holy, but actually keep it on the eighth day? Such a belief has no basis in the Scriptures.

God's Month

The calendar used today is different than the one God originally designed. The length of the month has changed. While no one knows exactly what necessitated a change in the number of days in a month, we are assured that something altered God's initial sequence of days. As the flood account demonstrates, 150 days once amounted to an exact five-month period. Notice the biblical record:

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened... And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days... Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 7:11-24; 8:4).

The fountains of the deep were opened on the 17th of the second month and lasted for 150 days. The ark came to rest in the

mountainous region of Ararat on the 17th of the seven month. This means that each of the five months were exactly 30 days.

A study of biblical prophecy reflects this same pattern. For example, a time, times, and half a time is equal to 3½ years—the equivalent of 1260 days (Rev. 12:6, 14). This number of days corresponds to 42 months and means that God’s reckoning of one year is exactly 360 days long consisting of twelve months containing 30 days each (Rev. 11:2).

Today the sun and moon are not perfectly synchronized. A lunar year consists of 354.37 days. Using the lunisolar Gregorian calendar, it is necessary to have 365-day years with a 366 day “leap year” inserted nearly every four years. Our modern months have anywhere from 28 to 31 days, but this has not always been the case.

At the time of creation, the sun and moon worked together like perfectly matched gears resulting in 30-day months. This reveals that God never intended to anchor Sabbath observance to the course of the moon. If that were His intent, God would have designed months that were only 28 days long—not 29 or 30. He would not have fashioned months with four Sabbaths that have one or two days left over. Instead of being based on God’s Word, lunar Sabbaths do NOT conform to the Scriptures.

The Annual Sabbaths

Thus far it has been demonstrated that God created a lunisolar calendar at the very beginning in order to keep track of annual holy day observances (Gen. 1:14). When declaring the holy days in Leviticus 23, God began by reminding Israel of His seventh day Sabbath:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; it *is* the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings’ (Leviticus 23:1-3).

The Eternal proceeded to mark the other required observances. While doing so, He identified just one new moon per year that was considered a holy day. That day is called a Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets. This annual celebration is the only first day of a month considered holy, and the only new moon that is kept as an annual Sabbath. As Moses recorded:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-*rest*, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD” (Leviticus 23:23-25).

The only new moon considered a holy day of worship is the one that falls on the first day of the seventh month. If God intended every new moon to be holy, there would certainly be direct instructions found in Leviticus 23 which is the foundational chapter detailing the observance of God’s holy days. Despite the lack of evidence, the lunar Sabbath doctrine infers that every new moon is considered a holy day, and should be treated much like the Sabbath. The fact that different lunar groups vary regarding how to observe the new moon is further evidence that there are no instructions in the Bible validating their practice.

In addition, because the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be kept on the 15th of the first month, and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, is to be kept on the 15th of the seventh month, lunar Sabbath adherents assert that this somehow validates their practice (Lev. 23:6, 34). However, it must be realized that these two dates were selected by God to begin annual Feast days—not seventh day Sabbaths. For more about this, see sub headers—*The Feast of Unleavened Bread* and *The Feast of Tabernacles*.

According to God’s clear instructions in Leviticus 23, the Eternal boldly declared His required days of worship. In so doing, He never stated that each new moon was sanctified. God’s decree also makes it obvious that the new moon was never used as an

anchor for determining the weekly Sabbath. If that were the case, He certainly would have acknowledged it in this monumental chapter containing plain and clear instructions for keeping all of God's appointed holy days.

Counting Pentecost

When the Almighty explained the method required for counting Pentecost, His instructions were that the seven Sabbaths would amount to 49 days. On the other hand, lunar Sabbaths require extra days that are not to be counted every month and therefore cannot fulfill God's decree. Notice His command.

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD... And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations (Leviticus 23:15-21).

Pentecost requires exactly 50 days in the count. Seven Sabbaths occurring within seven weeks must be included in that number. As another divine edict confirms:

You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin *to put* the sickle to the grain. Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you (Deuteronomy 16:9-10).

God said to count seven consecutive weeks. These seven weeks are defined as 49 days containing seven Sabbaths. The count concludes on the 50th day which is "the day after the seventh Sabbath." Enumerating seven Sabbaths necessitates counting over

a period of more than a single month. God's command made no provision for extra days that can be skipped and not reckoned.

Simple arithmetic leads to only one conclusion. The weekly Sabbath falls every seven days for seven complete weeks. God's command regarding the count to Pentecost proves that He does not sanction uncounted days at the end or the beginning of the month.

When speaking about the lunar Sabbath interval of one or two days at the end of four weeks, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* states that this would present a considerable problem with God's command to keep the Feast of Weeks. Hebrew scholars wrote that, if this kind of reckoning were true:

...weeks might be reckoned in such a way as to violate this [God's] injunction (1901, v. 12, p. 481).

The lunar Sabbath cycle is neither the command or will of Almighty God. It is a distorted invention of men. As stated earlier, those who observe lunar Sabbaths must directly violate God's command in order to keep their tradition. To this the Savior declared:

All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition (Mark 7:9).

Christ's Death and Resurrection

The resurrection of the Messiah was a miraculous event that has enormous meaning for all of humanity. The timing of his death and resurrection reveals that lunar Sabbaths were not observed by the Savior, His disciples, or the Jews of His day.

Christ prophesied that He would be killed and rise from the dead after three days and nights. If it were not exactly three days and nights then the Messiah would be a liar and we would have no Savior. Consider His words recorded in three gospel accounts:

For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they

will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day” (Mark 9:31).

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40).

Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ...But He was speaking of the temple of His body (John 2:19-21).

Many fail to properly understand the time sequence between the Savior’s death and resurrection. Their confusion is often the result of not recognizing that two Sabbaths occurred between His death and resurrection—an annual Sabbath and a weekly Sabbath.

Christ foretold that His body would be placed in a sepulcher where it would lay for three days and three nights. After His crucifixion, a rich man from Arimathea wrapped the body in linen and placed it in a new tomb (Mat. 27:57-60). That night began the first annual Sabbath of the year. It was the first high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (John 19:31). The second observance was the weekly Sabbath which completed the Savior’s three days and nights in the grave.

Counting back three days from the end of that weekly Sabbath, it is evident that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday. The Scriptures indicate that Wednesday was the Passover proper; a preparation day for the annual Sabbath (John 19:31). For this reason, work was permitted making the day of His death the 14th—not the 15th as some claim. The day following His death was Thursday—the first day of the Feast.

Therefore, Christ’s body was placed in the tomb at sunset on Wednesday. He was in the grave all night and throughout the following day on Thursday. His body remained in the sepulcher the next night and throughout Friday. When the Sabbath began on the third evening after His crucifixion, Christ was still dead and in the grave. He remained in the grave throughout the Sabbath.

Finally, the Messiah was raised at sunset just as the Sabbath ended—a full 72 hours after being placed in the tomb.

After the weekly Sabbath had passed, women brought spices to anoint Him during the dark hours of Sunday morning (Mark 16:1). When they arrived at the tomb, they found that the Savior had already risen from the dead (Luke 24:1-6). For more on this subject please read our booklet regarding the actual *Day of Christ's Resurrection*.

Three Days and Three Nights

Night One	Day One	Night Two	Day Two	Night Three	Day Three
Wednesday night	Thursday day	Thursday night	Friday day	Friday night	Saturday day
Christ in the grave	Christ in the grave	Christ in the grave	Christ in the grave	Christ in the grave	Christ in the grave
Christ's body placed in a sepulcher before the holy day begins	First high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread			Weekly Sabbath began at sunset	Believers rested on the weekly Sabbath

God commanded the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to be observed on the 15th of the first month (Lev. 23:6-7). The lunar Sabbath theory claims that the 15th day of every month is a seventh day Sabbath. But their hypothesis does not match the Biblical account of Christ's death and resurrection which includes an annual Sabbath and a weekly Sabbath—both of which occurred within a three day period.

Christ's burial on the 15th, along with the weekly Sabbath ending with His resurrection after three days and nights, makes lunar Sabbaths impossible. The lunar Sabbath theory is either wrong or Christ and the four gospel writers are liars. Since the latter cannot be true, we can conclude that lunar Sabbaths are a fraud.

Historical Evidence

The seven-day week has been in use for as long as the record of history. It was established by God at the beginning of creation, and there is no credible evidence indicating that this cyclical observance has ever changed. The continuous use of a seven-day week even appears in the history of the Jews during the Babylonian captivity of the 6th century B.C. (*Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*).

Despite these truths, the lunar Sabbath theory demands that an eight or nine day week must be observed at the end of every month. But this has never been practiced by God's faithful people. Consider the words of Broughton Richmond who represented the International Calendar Organization early in the 20th century. At this time, the nations were considering revising the worldwide calendar, and he wrote:

The "Exodus" from Egypt was undertaken under the leadership of Moses, an intelligent, resourceful and well-informed man who, aware of their origin, would also know of the calendar system in use at their destination. One of his first acts as a leader was to demand observance of the seven-day week, which they had inherited from their ancestor Abraham of Chaldea but apparently neglected while in Egypt. The week cycle provided an important interval for religious observances (*Time Measurement and Calendar Construction*, p. 74).

Some claim that the Jews originally kept lunar Sabbaths, but adopted a continuous seven-day week while captive in Babylon. However, history debunks this theory. An extensive study of the Sabbath in 1911 at the University of Nebraska resulted in the following conclusion:

That the periodic week was borrowed from Babylonia is an hypothesis that finds little support in any cuneiform evidence at present available. It is highly questionable whether the Babylonians ever possessed the institution of a periodic seven-day week. That it was borrowed from

the Canaanites is a gratuitous assumption. Until evidence to the contrary is found we may with good reason attribute the periodic week to the Hebrews themselves—an institution as characteristically their own as formed the nundinal period to the Romans, both being weeks which ran from month to month and year to year (The University Studies of the University of Nebraska, v. XI, Rest Days; A Sociological Study, p. 134).

God revealed how the seventh day was to be kept prior to Sinai. He reinstructed Israel about the Sabbath during the Exodus. Hundreds of years later, a faithful servant of God stated:

You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments. **You made known to them Your holy Sabbath**, and commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses Your servant (Nehemiah 9:13-14).

Nehemiah wrote that God had given Israel just laws, statutes, and commandments. After examining the entire Bible containing the Almighty's righteous commands, there is not a single word indicating that His people are to observe lunar Sabbaths. Instead, God's faithful continued to keep the weekly Sabbath independent of the moon.

This truth is also reflected in the Diaspora. After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, not all Jews returned to Jerusalem. Many migrated to various locations throughout the continent. As they relocated, synagogues were erected wherever they went, and the Jews continued to keep the seventh day Sabbath. An examination of the historical record reveals that these people living vast distances apart all observed the same continuous seven day sequence still used today.

This is evident from remarks made by the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire. Notice the reason for his opposition to a proposed calendar change during a League of Nations conference held in 1931:

In the 1920s the League of Nations took an interest in both the Eastman Plan and the World Calendar; but the interruption to the week proved a stumbling-block. In 1931 the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, Dr Joseph Hertz delivered an impassioned attack on the reforms at League headquarters in Geneva, **emphasizing the impossibility of Orthodox Jews accepting an eight-day interval between Sabbaths, and the inconvenience they would suffer by observing Sabbath on another day than Saturday** (*A Short History of Time*, Leofranc Holford-Strevens, pp. 73-74).

This highly regarded member of the International community was thoroughly schooled regarding when the ancient Israelites kept the Sabbath. If lunar Sabbaths were true, this honored Jewish rabbi would have no problem accepting months in which eight day intervals occasionally fell between Sabbaths. Instead, he vehemently opposed such an idea.

In ancient times, the Greek and Roman calendars were different than that used by Israel. The Romans had an informal cycle of market days held every eight days. However, after Emperor Constantine came to power, he adopted the continuous seven day cycle that was already observed by God's people. Consider the words of calendar expert David Ewing Duncan who wrote:

The Emperor's first move to reorder the calendar came in an edict issued in 321, nine years after the Battle of the Mulvian Bridge, when he established Sunday as the first day in a seven-day week—a unit of time unknown in the original Roman calendar of kalends, nones, and ides. According to Constantine's dictate, all citizens other than farmers were ordered to abstain from work on *dies Solis*—the Sun's day. He also ordered the courts closed for litigation and the commanders of the army to restrict military exercises so that soldiers could worship the god of their choice.

Constantine's selection of Sunday was not without controversy. It blatantly rejected the long-held

observance of Saturday as the Sabbath by Jews... By placing the Sabbath on the day devoted to the sun in the seven-day cycle of pagan planet-gods, the emperor also carried the favor of Mithraists and other sun worshipers... Indeed, the seven-day system was already ancient by Constantine's day (*Calendar – Humanity's Epic Struggle to Determine a True and Accurate Year*, pp. 44-45).

Philo was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived during the time of Christ. His writings describe a people outside of God's fold who kept a single holy day each month. Philo clearly considered this form of lunar Sabbath keeping as separate from the Jews who kept the Creator's Sabbath every seven days without fail. Notice his words:

The fourth commandment has reference to the sacred seventh day, that it may be passed in a sacred and holy manner. Now some states keep the holy festival only once in the month, counting from the new moon, as a day sacred to God; but the nation of the Jews keep every seventh day regularly, after each interval of six days (*The Decalogue*, XX).

In addition to the long history of God's faithful keeping the Sabbath at consecutive seven-day intervals, Historians agree that the week in its current state has existed for ages. They admit that our weekly cycle was never connected to the beginning of a lunar month:

The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatever to the celestial motions, a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity. Although it did not enter into the calendar of the Greeks, and was not introduced at Rome till after the reign of Theodosius, it has been employed from time immemorial in almost all eastern countries; and forms neither an aliquot part of the year **nor of the lunar month**... (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, eleventh edition, v. IV, p. 988).

Dr. Robertson was once the director of the U.S. Naval Observatory. In a personal letter, dated March 12, 1932, he states that there has never been a break in the weekly cycle:

We have had occasion to investigate the results of the works of specialists in chronology and we have never found one of them that has ever had the slightest doubt of the continuity of the weekly cycle since long before the Christian era. There has been no change in our calendar in past centuries that has affected in any way the cycle of the week (*Reasons for Our Faith*, p. 305).

A newly formed League of Nations proposed reforming the Gregorian calendar shortly after World War I. At that time, the government of Finland presented the following observation from one of its chief astronomers:

The reform would break the division of the week, which has been followed for thousands of years, and therefore has been hallowed by immemorial use (*Report on Calendar Reform*, Anders Donner, Aug. 17, 1926, p. 51).

The government of France also weighed in on this debate. Their leading astronomer made the following statement:

I have always hesitated to suggest breaking the continuity of the week, which without doubt is the most ancient scientific institution bequeathed to us by antiquity (ibid, Edouard Baillaud, p. 52).

Professor D. Eginitis was the director of the observatory of Athens and a member of the League of Nations committee during the mid 1920s. Writing about a proposed calendar reform, he also acknowledged that the weekly cycle has been unbroken from ancient times:

The continuity of the week... has crossed the centuries and all known calendars, still intact.

Dr. Dyson, an astronomer in the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, also stated that there has never been a change in the weekly cycle:

As far as I know, in the various changes of the Calendar there has been no change in the seven day rotation of the week, which has come down from very early times (personal letter, March 4, 1932).

Former professor of astronomy at Yale University, Dr. Charles Totten, did extensive research to account for time lost during Joshua's long day. During His studies, Totten recognized this same truth and stated:

It is patent that the human race never lost the septenary [seven day] sequence of week days, and the Sabbath of these latter times comes down to us from Adam through the flood, past Joshua's long day, by the dial of Ahaz and out of the sepulcher of the Saviour, without a single lapse. No day is missing' no cycle calls for less; all call for the same, and all unite in a concert of testimony not to be shaken by any ingenuity of man or devil (*All About the Bible*, p. 286).

The Bible record is the best historical evidence supporting a continuous weekly cycle independent of the new moon. Consider the fact that God retains the same patterns regarding other occasions in which He requires counting. For example, the "Sabbath of solemn rest for the land" is to take place every seven years (Lev. 25:3-4). God does not allow for uncounted years. Further, the Jubilee is kept after seven sets of seven years. There is no additional set of uncounted years in this calculation either. These observances reflect a consistent pattern in which God uses continual sets of seven with no skipped or uncounted days, months, or years.

There are some lunar Sabbath articles that quote spurious historians who state that the Jews counted seventh day Sabbaths from the new moon at an earlier time in history. Nonetheless, not

one of them is able to produce a shred of credible evidence that links lunar Sabbaths to God's faithful people. Those who remained faithful to God never used the new moon to reckon the weekly Sabbath. However, there were pagans who did.

For example, the Babylonians reckoned seven day intervals from the day of the new moon and celebrated the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th as "holy days" also called "evil days" (meaning unsuitable for certain behavior). On these days officials were prohibited from various activities and common men were forbidden to "make a wish" (*Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, pp. 889–891).

Surprisingly, one lunar Sabbath website claims that the Babylonian pagan observance is evidence in favor of lunar Sabbaths. The author states that pagans learned the observance of the new moon from God's people. However, such a theory is hearsay and is in fact a "backward" thought process. In other words, the record of the faithless has been that they do not attempt to imitate God's faithful—not the other way around. Acknowledging that lawless pagans observed new moons does not add credence to lunar Sabbaths. Instead, it further proves that such a practice violates God's law.

Misrepresented Scriptures

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

The lunar Sabbath doctrine claims that weekly Sabbaths must be observed on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of each month. Their theory is based on a notion that nearly every mention of the 15th in the Bible indicates a lunar Sabbath observance. However, a simple study of the verses they attempt to use reveals otherwise. For example, the foundational holy days chapter of the Bible states:

These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD's Passover. **And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread** to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread... The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it* (Leviticus 23:4-8).

The Eternal declared that the 15th of the first month is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It cannot be assumed that it was also a lunar Sabbath when the Scriptures do not actually state this is the case. In fact, Leviticus 23 makes a clear distinction between the weekly and annual Sabbaths.

Further, while attempting to identify the 15th as a lunar Sabbath, adherents of this erroneous doctrine cannot account for the second annual Sabbath which occurs on the 21st. The first day of the feast falls on the 15th and the last day commences six days later on the 21st. The last day of this Feast does not occur seven days later on the 22nd. Consequently, there can only be one correct understanding of these verses.

The 15th day of the first month, being an annual Sabbath, does not serve as evidence of a lunar Sabbath. Just the opposite is true when considering the seventh day of the Feast commencing on the 21st. Notice God's instructions:

So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of

the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening (the beginning of the 15th day), you shall eat unleavened bread, **until the twenty-first day of the month** at evening (Exodus 12:17-18).

This leads to another absurd assumption that some make when considering God's command to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Lunar Sabbath adherents assert that Exodus 13:6 speaks of a lunar Sabbath occurring on the 22nd of the first month. Notice the verse in question:

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on **the seventh day** *there shall be* a feast to the LORD (Exodus 13:6).

Lunar Sabbath keepers claim that the word "seventh" means a seventh day according to a lunar Sabbath week. Their assertion disregards God's clear instructions that this is the seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is a seven-day celebration which requires two holy convocations occurring on the first and last days. The Feast starts on the 15th of the first month and lasts for seven days. The seventh day occurs on the 21st. This was clearly stated prior when God declared:

You shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening (Exodus 12:18).

Notice God's instructions just prior to indicating that the last day of the Feast is the 21st day of the first month.

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. **On the first day** *there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you*. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that*

which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you (Exodus 12:15-16).

Regardless of the fact that the “seventh day” of this Feast is the 21st day of the month, lunar Sabbath adherents still argue that the word “seventh” in these verses refers to a lunar Sabbath falling on the seventh day of a lunar Sabbath week. If this were true they would be forced to conclude that the words “first day” refer to the first day of a lunar Sabbath week. That would mean God commanded His people to keep a Sabbath on the first day of the week which is something even the lunar Sabbath observers would reject. Despite obvious contradictions in their theory, they continue to misuse God’s declaration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread by claiming that the 15th of the first month is a lunar Sabbath.

Lunar Sabbath arguments do not conform to the biblical facts. God NEVER commanded His people to keep lunar Sabbaths. It is clear that God was ONLY talking about the holy convocations during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There is no mention of the new moon and absolutely nothing in Scripture indicates that these Feast days were also lunar Sabbath celebrations.

The 15th and the Manna

After Israel kept the Passover on the 14th day of the first month, they left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and arrived at the Wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the second month (Exo. 12:6; 16:1). God proceeded to test them by reinstating the law of the seventh day Sabbath and providing bread from heaven. The test began on the 16th when the manna first rained down. That meant the 16th was the first day of the week. Six days later, the 22nd was also a weekly Sabbath (Exodus 16:4-30). As the following chart illustrates, the Sabbath on this **second month** occurred on both the 15th and the 22nd.

The First Week of Manna in the Second Month

15 th	16 th day 1	17 th day 2	18 th day 3	19 th day 4	20 th day 5	21 st day 6	22 nd day 7
Sabbath	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	2 days of manna provided	Sabbath

Lunar Sabbath advocates assume that the 15th and the 22nd are lunar Sabbath dates. They combine their assumption with the belief that the 15th of the **first month** was also a lunar Sabbath. Because the literal seven day cycle does not allow for the weekly Sabbath to occur on the 15th of two consecutive months, they infer that the 15th of both the first and second months were lunar Sabbaths and claim this validates their doctrine.

This theory might seem legitimate if Bible readers disregard the fact that their theory is wholly based on assumptions. First they claim that the 15th day of the first month was a lunar Sabbath. However, the Scriptures clearly state that the 15th of the first month was not a lunar Sabbath, but an annual Sabbath—the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6). Because of this truth, it is entirely possible for the weekly Sabbath to fall on the 15th day of the second month. It is not only possible, that is what actually happened. In fact, after reviewing the Hebrew calendar back to the year 1753 AD, the Eternal Church of God found that the weekly Sabbath occasionally fell on the 15th day of the second month many times over the last 250 years.

Another important fact which destroys the lunar Sabbath theory is the miracle of the manna. God commanded Israel to begin gathering it on the first day of the week that fell in the middle of the second month. The Eternal declared that there would be a recurring process of gathering manna six days a week, and that “TWICE AS MUCH” manna would be found on the sixth day—a day also known as the day of preparation. God also stated that NONE would be found on the seventh day; and He made no mention of the day of the month. This proves that the Sabbath was a continual sequence of seven days irrespective of the monthly cycle.

God's Weekly Cycle of Manna

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	2 days of manna provided	no manna provided

God's instructions present a major problem for those who claim that Israel observed lunar Sabbaths. According to the lunar Sabbath doctrine, one or two days at the end of every month are not counted in the seven day cycle. However, these days are still numbered on the calendar and Israel would still need to collect manna on any uncounted days. God would certainly need to inform Israel what to do on those days that lunar Sabbath adherents claim are excluded each month, and yet there are no such instructions found in the Bible. If we attempt to apply a lunar Sabbath theory to God's command, it would be necessary for the Eternal to deviate from His own decree and do one of the following during the last week of each month:

- (A). Provide three days of manna on the months with only 29 days, or four days of manna in the months having 30 days.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Not counted	Not counted
23 rd day of the month	24 th day of the month	25 th day of the month	26 th day of the month	27 th day of the month	28 th day of the month	29 th day of the month	30 th day of the month	new moon, 1 st day of the month
1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	3 or 4 days of manna provided	no manna provided	no manna provided	no manna provided

- (B). Disrupt the six-day sequence by providing manna for six days, skip a day, then provide an additional two days manna on a single day, and skip the day of the new moon.

The Truth about Lunar Sabbaths

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Not counted	Not counted
23 rd day of the month	24 th day of the month	25 th day of the month	26 th day of the month	27 th day of the month	28 th day of the month	29 th day of the month	30 th day of the month	new moon, 1 st day of the month
1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	2 days of manna provided	no manna provided	2 days of manna provided	no manna provided

(C). Provide a single day’s portion of manna for six consecutive days during 29-day months, and then provide twice the manna on the seventh day. Or, provide a single day’s portion of manna for seven consecutive days in 30-day months, and then provide twice the manna on an eighth day.

Not counted	Not counted	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
30 th day of the month	new moon, 1 st day of the month	2 nd day of the month	3 rd day of the month	4 th day of the month	5 th day of the month	6 th day of the month	7 th day of the month	8 th day of the month
1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	1 day of manna provided	2 days of manna provided	no manna provided

As the previous charts demonstrate, such scenarios are contrary to what the Eternal boldly proclaimed. God made it absolutely clear that He would give the Israelites manna for “six days” and “on the sixth day” there would be TWICE as much. There is no deviation from this pattern. His divinely orchestrated arrangement proves that the Sabbath is a weekly cycle independent of the position of the moon.

The theory of lunar Sabbaths might sound plausible to some until the details are considered. Once we compare it to the Scriptures, lunar Sabbaths clearly do not conform to God’s Word. Instead, they directly violate the fourth Commandment.

The Feast of Tabernacles

Another misused Scripture is found in the book of Numbers. Though the lunar Sabbath theory asserts that the following verses point to a lunar Sabbath, a quick review demonstrates otherwise:

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days (Numbers 29:12)

The 15th day of the seventh month is NOT a lunar Sabbath. Instead, it is the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles—an annual holy day. As God previously declared:

Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘**The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.** On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the... Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, **you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest**’ (Leviticus 23:34-39).

Another fact proving that this was not a lunar Sabbath observance is shown by the commanded annual Sabbath rest on the eighth day. According to the lunar Sabbath doctrine, the next lunar Sabbath would be seven days after the 15th, but God said that the eighth day would be an annual Sabbath and a sacred assembly to mark the conclusion of this unique festival:

...On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work (Numbers 29:35).

Sanctifying the Priesthood

Chapter eight of Leviticus lists instructions for sanctifying Aaron and his sons as priests to serve God in the tabernacle. Proponents of lunar Sabbaths assert that the seven days of consecration, and the proceeding ceremony on the eighth day, indicate a lunar Sabbath observance on the eighth day of a lunar month. Notice God's instructions:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread... And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting *for* seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you... It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel... Then he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one... And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people (Leviticus 8-9:23)

First recognize that there is no mention of a new moon or any reference to the first of the month. There is no indication that the concluding ceremony was on the eighth day of a particular month. The verses simply state that Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated for seven days, and that Moses called for an assembly in which offerings were given on the eighth day following their consecration. The number eight symbolizes a new beginning, and this was a fresh start for the men chosen to serve as priests.

To claim that these events began on a new moon and ended on a lunar Sabbath is another false assumption. The lunar Sabbath doctrine again attempts to add misinformation to the Scriptures—a practice that God strictly forbids!

You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments

of the LORD your God which I command you (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Appointing the Moon

Another Scripture misrepresented by lunar Sabbath adherents is a beautiful Psalm written to praise God. While poetically declaring the Eternal's glory, the author wrote about many wonderful things God had made. A few of the creations mentioned are the sun and moon. The psalmist wrote that:

He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows it's going down (Psalm 104:19).

Proponents of lunar Sabbaths assert that this verse validates their practice. However, their conclusion is based on another assumption that they choose to impose in an attempt to validate their false doctrine.

The first question that must be asked is does this Scripture say that seventh day Sabbaths are to be counted from the new moon? Because the answer is obviously no, what is the author talking about?

This verse simply relates that God designed the moon to serve humanity through the means of an astronomical calendar. As indicated in the book of Genesis:

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years" (Genesis 1:14).

The sun was positioned to dictate a day. Its purpose was for "signs." The Hebrew word for signs is *oth* meaning "a signal" or "mark" (H226) Thus, the sun enables God's people to count days for the purpose of observing the weekly Sabbath. At the end of the sixth day, the sun sets on the horizon signaling the seventh day.

In this same verse, the Hebrew word for "seasons" is *moed* meaning "an *appointment*, that is, a fixed *time* or season; specifically a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an

assembly...” (Strong’s, H4150). At least nine English translations of the Bible indicate that this is a term used for holy day festivals. God’s purpose for putting the moon in its respective position permits humanity to have an astronomical calendar for the purpose of tracking holy day observances—also known as annual Sabbaths. Psalm 104 confirms the fact that the moon dictates annual holy days—not lunar Sabbaths.

It is also interesting to note that the moon’s gravitational pull literally regulates the earth’s seasons. Consider the words of Norwegian science journalist Hanne Jakobsen who wrote:

With no moon as a stabilizer, the Earth would sometimes tilt all the way over and lie on its side in relation to its orbit around the Sun. This would make for extreme differences between temperatures and daylight throughout the year. At other times the Earth’s axis would be straight up and down, making night and day equally long, year round, and **there would be no seasons** (<http://sciencenordic.com/what-would-we-do-without-moon>, retr. 11/20/2014).

The moon’s role in the seasons of the earth is well known to the scientific world today, but it is nothing new. God designed it this way from in the beginning of our creation. The Psalmist was not referring to lunar Sabbaths. Instead, he was speaking of God’s calendar and the seasons caused by the moon’s relationship to our planet.

Changing Times and Seasons

The book of Daniel contains prophecies that have both come to pass and many that have not yet happened. One of them concerns a powerful empire that will rise up out of the nations. As the prophet wrote:

The ten horns *are* ten kings *who* shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first *ones*, and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and

shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time (Daniel 7:24-25).

Lunar Sabbath adherents claim that the intent to change “times and law” refers to history’s departure from observing lunar Sabbaths. However, their claim disregards God’s intended understanding of Daniel’s vision.

The prophet Daniel witnessed four beasts coming up from the sea. These beasts represent empires that would exist down through history. The first three have come to pass; while the fourth would exist in various forms until the end of the age. Nevertheless, the final state of this fourth empire, spoken of in the previous verses, has not been fulfilled. Therefore, this part of Daniel’s prophecy has not happened yet!

Instead of referring to lunar Sabbaths, the previous Scriptures speak of a future world leader that will blaspheme God and persecute the Almighty’s people. This world government will attempt to change God’s commandments, and outlaw His true days of worship, while enforcing fraudulent observances. This will culminate with the 3½ year great tribulation (Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14). For more on this subject, see our booklet—*Understanding the Mark of the Beast*.

Ordinances of the Moon

Another set of misrepresented verses are found in the book of Jeremiah. While prophesying of the New Covenant the Almighty will make with Judah, the Eternal declared:

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts *is* His name): If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever (Jeremiah 31:35-36).

Some claim that the word “ordinances” is a reference to rules regarding lunar Sabbaths. However, these verses do not say that the moon is a statute for Sabbath observance. Instead, they use the Hebrew words *chuqqah* and *chuq*. These words are defined as “an enactment, commandment, decree, law, or task” (*Strong’s*, H2706, 2708). As stated in the previous section, this is a general expression referring to God’s multifaceted purpose for designing the moon.

The creation obeys the Creator’s voice. The disciples witnessed this firsthand and said “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” (Mat. 8:27). The Word of God spoke and life sprang forth (Gen. 1-2). The laws of physics spoken of by Jeremiah were also created by His decree. Matter and its motion through space and time are regulated by God’s laws of energy and gravity.

The previous Scriptures simply point out that the moon’s purpose through its fixed orbit around the earth is unchangingly set by a law God commanded. If the moon had no rules governing its orbit, and could suddenly drift away from the earth, then Israel would also cease to exist. The point God made is that Israel will continue to exist as a nation before Him just as the laws dictating the moon’s operation shall endure.

Purim

The book of Esther tells the inspiring story of faithful people God used to save the Jews from calamity. After Haman persuaded King Ahasuerus to declare a day of nationwide persecution of these people on the 13th of the twelfth month, Esther convinced the king to allow the Jews to powerfully fight back. When the day of reckoning arrived, the Jewish people successfully rose up against their foes. The Jews celebrated their victory by proclaiming a two day holiday known as Purim.

Lunar Sabbath adherents assert that Purim indicates the Jews were observing a lunar Sabbath on the 15th of Adar. Could this be true? Let’s examine the narrative in question:

Now in the twelfth month, that *is*, the month of Adar, **on the thirteenth day**, *the time* came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves overpowered those who hated them. The Jews gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, because fear of them fell upon all people... Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them (Esther 9:1-5).

The conflict began on the 13th of the twelfth month. With God's help, the Jews triumphed over their enemies throughout the provinces. However, it was Esther's desire that those who sought to kill the Jews be entirely eradicated from the citadel of Shushan. Therefore, Esther asked Ahasuerus to allow the Jews one more day of retaliation:

Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to do again tomorrow according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the gallows." So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons (Esther 9:13-14).

Esther wanted all the enemies of her people that dwelled in the capital city destroyed and her wish was granted. Because the original proclamation commenced on the 13th, her request for another day added the 14th to the king's decree. This is noted in the following verses:

And the Jews who *were* in Shushan gathered together again **on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan**; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder (Esther 9:15).

It is important to note that this extra day was added only in the citadel at Shushan. The amendment did not affect other areas. The counterattack in all other provinces only occurred on the 13th with a Jewish celebration taking place on the 14th. As was recorded:

The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. **This was on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of *the month* they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness** (Esther 9:16-17).

The Jews in most provinces fought on the 13th and made the 14th a day of feasting. However, the Jews in Shushan fought on the 13th as well as the 14th. As a result, God's people in the capital city rested and celebrated on the 15th. Note the biblical and historical record:

But the Jews who *were* at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth *day*, as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of *the month* they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness (Esther 9:18).

Lunar Sabbath keepers claim that this celebration on the 15th is proof of a lunar Sabbath observance. However, there is no evidence to back up such an assertion. We only need to ask a simple question in order to reveal the truth. Do any of the verses in the book of Esther say that they kept a Sabbath on the 15th? No! The reason for resting and feasting in Shushan on the 15th is directly noted by the author of the book of Esther. It was because they fought for two days prior.

Further evidence that this was not a lunar Sabbath observance is found by recognizing a few other points. First, it was Haman who decided to make the 13th a day of war against the Jews. It was determined by casting lots which set the month and day of this conflict (Est. 3:7).

Second, it was Esther's request to make the 14th another day of war against the Jew's enemies, but only in Shushan. Finally, it was a collaborative Jewish decision to make both the 14th and 15th holidays. The 15th was not considered a Sabbath. It was a day equivalent to the 14th.

In conclusion, it is obvious that this was not a celebration declared by God. Purim was instituted by the Jews. As the Scriptures continue to explain:

And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor. So **the Jews accepted the custom which THEY HAD BEGUN... So they called these days Purim**, after the name Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them, **the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year**, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time (Esther 9:20-27).

The Jewish leadership made the decision to celebrate a holiday on the 14th and the 15th of the twelfth month and called it Purim. There is no mention of a Sabbath observance on these days. In fact, the word "Sabbath" never appears in the entire book. To claim that the book of Esther validates lunar Sabbaths is entirely unfounded.

The Conquest of Jericho

One of the main arguments lunar Sabbath adherents try to use relates to the conquest of Jericho. God commanded some of

the priesthood and all men of war to march around the city of Jericho for seven days. Because the seven days were consecutive, one of these days would have been a Sabbath.

The fourth Commandment prohibits work on the seventh day, and some consider marching around a city while blowing trumpets unnecessary physical exertion. This has led some to believe that lunar Sabbaths were observed at that time. Lunar sabbath proponents assert that the march around Jericho began at the end of the month when their man-made system would have left an eight or nine day period between Sabbaths. However, such a belief misses a number of important points.

First, no command prevents walking on the Sabbath. God's instructions to Israel in Exodus 16:29 were made in the context of going out to gather manna. Notice the entire verse:

See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day (Exodus 16:29).

This verse does not say that walking is unacceptable on the Sabbath. However, some think that the book of Acts relates an unsaid law regarding a safe distance to walk on the Sabbath. As Luke recorded:

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey (Acts 1:12).

The mount of Olivet was somewhere between 1000 and 1500 meters from Jerusalem—equivalent to less than a mile. Does this verse indicate an acceptable distance to walk on the Sabbath?

In order to answer this question, it must be understood that God never declared an acceptable distance for walking on the Sabbath. What Luke noted in the book of Acts was only a tradition of the Jews that was likely derived from God's instructions for allotting an area of land to the Levites within every city of Israel (Num. 35:4-5). It may be that the Jews considered God's allotment

an acceptable distance for the Levites to walk on the Sabbath which led to the creation of an acceptable “Sabbath day’s journey.” Luke’s reference was not a validation of such a tradition. The author merely used this term to relate how far it was from Olivet to Jerusalem.

This measurable distance traveled by the disciples cannot be found within the guidelines of God’s laws, statutes, and judgments. Notwithstanding, this does not mean there is no limit to how far a person can travel on the Sabbath. Each situation must be considered with honest, ethical, and righteous judgment. We must apply God’s instructions for refraining from work, not doing our own pleasure, determining what is truly necessary, and what could be considered a violation of the fourth commandment (Isa. 58:13).

With this in mind, the biblical city of Jericho was discovered by Charles Warren in 1868. Extensive investigations using more modern techniques were made under the direction of Kathleen Kenyon between 1952 and 1958. Because the story of Israel’s march around Jericho has significantly affected millions of people, believers tend to think that the city was much larger than the actual site reveals. The archeological dig found the perimeter of Jericho to be approximately 600 meters. Understanding that the assembly of Israelite priests and soldiers would have begun to march from a distance away from the city, God’s command would have required them to march more than a mile each day. A man or woman in good health can leisurely walk one mile in about 20 minutes. This would not be considered a strenuous task, or an unnecessary exertion of energy.

Another point to consider is that the entire nation of Israel did not march around Jericho. The only people instructed to carry out these orders were seven priests, some of the Levites to carry the Ark, and men of war (Jos. 6:2-6). This was a commanded duty by God—one that was priestly in nature, and as such could be performed on the Sabbath without violating God’s sanctified day. For example, Christ explained that the work the priests performed for the required sacrifices was permissible because God had commanded it to be done on the Sabbath (Mat. 12:5). Circumcision

was allowed to be performed on the Sabbath (John 7:23). Any order from the Almighty would never be considered a violation of His law.

Additionally, Christ made it clear that the Sabbath law permits work that is necessary to preserve life or property. This is known as an “ox in a ditch” principle (Luke 14:5). The march around Jericho was part of God’s plan to establish and protect the nation of Israel. Thus, He commanded them to conquer Jericho. This too would fall into the category of activities permitted on the Sabbath (Luke 13:15-16).

Consider a related example from the Exodus. God told Israel to keep the Passover on the 14th and then to march out of Egypt the next day while transporting all their possessions. More than two million people plundered the Egyptians and proceeded to walk day and night from Goshen all the way to the edge of the Red Sea. This trek covered more than 100 miles and lasted a minimum of seven days. Therefore, Israel journeyed on the first and last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as well as traveling on the weekly Sabbath. Still, the children of Israel were blameless in the eyes of God.

These facts indicate that God commanded certain individuals to march around Jericho for the good of the whole nation. It was an order given by God to fulfill His plan for Israel. Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath, and He indicated that situations commanded by Him are not considered unnecessary work on the Sabbath (Mat. 12:1-8). It is also possible that the distance traveled by the soldiers and priests was relatively short. Therefore, these individuals would have marched around Jericho as God commanded and yet they did not violate the fourth Commandment.

Circumcision on the Eighth Day

Many lunar Sabbath keepers assert that Christ’s statement pointing out that circumcision was allowed on the Sabbath means that infants were ONLY circumcised on the Sabbath. While pairing their assumption with God’s decree to circumcise male children when they are eight days old, they infer that circumcision was only performed on the eighth day of a lunar month. This inference fits

nicely with their theory that the eighth day of every month is a lunar Sabbath. However, they conveniently overlook two important facts when making this assumption. First, neither Christ nor any Scripture states that circumcision was only done on the Sabbath. Consider the Messiah's words.

Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? (John 7:21-23).

It is clear that the Son of God did not declare that circumcision was only performed on the Sabbath. Instead, the Savior was making a comparison between two kinds of work that were allowed on the Sabbath. Christ had healed a man on the seventh day and the Jews accused Him of breaking the fourth Commandment. He explained that the miracle He performed was a good deed and did not violate the Sabbath. Christ compared this to a situation where the eighth day of a male child's life might occur on the Sabbath. In such cases, circumcision on the Sabbath did not violate the fourth Commandment. As the Savior stated:

Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:12).

A defining factor refuting this particular lunar Sabbath argument is the actual circumcision commandment. God instructed Abraham and his descendants to circumcise male children when they were eight days old. The Eternal never said to circumcise them on the eighth day of a lunar month. Notice His words:

He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in

your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant (Genesis 17:12).

God's command does not say to only circumcise children on the eighth day after a new moon. The instructions are clear. Circumcision was to be done when male children were eight days old; regardless of when this eighth day transpired.

Buying and Selling

The book of Amos mentions the new moon in the context of God abhorring the irreverent attitudes of Israel. Because the people had become dishonest and did not respect the principles of His moral law, the Eternal declared:

Hear this, you who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail, saying: "When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may trade wheat?" Making the ephah small and the shekel large, falsifying the scales by deceit (Amos 8:4-5).

Because God chastised these people for wishing the new moon and Sabbath would pass so that they could sell and trade, some believe this is an indication of God's desire for His people to keep the new moon as a holy day. However, we must ask the following questions.

Do these verses say to keep the new moon as a holy day? Do they tell us to use the new moon to count to the weekly Sabbath? The answer is no in both instances. There is not a single Scripture stating how, or why, the new moon should be observed.

Amos simply noted an age when many Israelites did not buy or trade on the new moon. This was a tradition of that time despite the fact that there was no Scriptural command to observe the new moon. Nonetheless, the point God made was that many desired these days to pass quickly so that they could conduct their greedy, dishonest, business practices. However, God only commanded that no work may be done on the Sabbath. He NEVER commanded anyone to abstain from work or business on the new moon.

Those seeking to validate lunar Sabbaths interpret this Scripture to say the new moon should be observed much like the Sabbath. Such an interpretation is another attempt to justify their doctrine, but their inference is fallacious. Their conclusion is an assumption and not established on what the Scriptures actually say.

The book of Amos never states that God commanded new moons to be holy days. In fact, while the Sabbath allows no work to be done, and the holy days require no servile work, God commanded Israel to work on the first day of the month. Note the following words of the Almighty:

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting...” And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, **on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up** (Exodus 40:1-2, 17).

Let No Man Judge You

The Apostle Paul made a statement that has led some to believe the new moon could possibly be a holy day equivalent to the Sabbath. Paul told the brethren in Colosse:

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).

In order to understand the apostle’s reference to the new moon, we must recognize what Paul did NOT say. He did not say that the new moon was a holy day. He did not say that the new moon was likened to the Sabbath. He did not tell Christians that they must use the new moon to count to the Sabbath.

The point Paul related was not to let anyone pass judgment on those who obey God in these things. The subjects mentioned are food, drink, festivals (holy days), the new moon, and the Sabbath. What do all of these have in common? They are all principle aspects of a true Christian’s way of life.

Regarding food, we must not eat unclean meats. When it comes to drink, we must not be drunkards. Only consume in moderation. When it comes to the Sabbath, we are to keep the seventh day. When it comes to annual festivals, we are to keep God's holy days according to specified dates. But how do we know what dates to keep? By using a monthly calendar based on the new moon!

The new moon was established as an anchor to display the beginning of each month. This is vital in regard to holy day observance. Without God inspiring Moses and the 70 elders to maintain a calendar, we would not know when the holy days are to be kept.

This makes the new moon significant. The celestial bodies were set in the firmament so that humanity would know when to keep God's holy days. Nevertheless, this does not make every new moon a holy day, or a means to determine the weekly Sabbaths. Although it is included in Paul's list, the apostle never stated that new moons are to be celebrated in a specific manner. From his time to ours, the weekly Sabbath continued to be observed every seven days regardless of the new moon. Not a single Scripture in the Bible states otherwise.

The Millennium

The book of Isaiah explains that people will worship the Eternal on the new moon when Christ rules the earth. The prophet recorded God's words, stating:

“And it shall come to pass *that* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD (Isaiah 66:23).

The book of Ezekiel also mentions the new moon. This great prophet's writings contain seven chapters describing the temple that will be established after Christ returns. In the 46th chapter, Ezekiel wrote:

Thus says the Lord GOD: “The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six

working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened... Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on the Sabbaths and the New Moons” (Ezekiel 46:1-3).

During the millennium, the temple will be open for worship on new moons. This will occur when all will obey God. People will worship Him on the new moon at that time.

Adherents of lunar Sabbaths claim this prophesy is proof that God desires us to observe the new moon as a holy day; as well as keeping lunar Sabbaths today. What they fail to understand is, just because the gate of the temple will be open during Christ’s millennial rule, and people will come to worship, it does not mean the new moon is equivalent to a Sabbath. Neither does it mean that the new moon should be an anchor for calculating the weekly day of rest.

It should be understood that we live in a different age. There is no temple today. God is not calling everyone to worship Him during this age. We live during the time of the gentiles and there are no instructions regarding the new moon.

Christians certainly should use the new moon as a basis for celebrating God’s annual Feast’s, but a command to observe it, or how to commemorate the day, is not declared by God at this time. Therefore, while noting the new moon by having a special meal, praying more, or holding a Bible study, may be appropriate—it is not commanded. In addition, it is inappropriate to declare that no work or business be done on the new moon. It further violates God’s commandments to use the new moon as a way to determine when to observe the weekly Sabbath.

Another interesting point regarding Ezekiel 46 and Isaiah 66 is the fact that those who might want to worship at the gate of the temple may do so. But these verses do not state that it is a commanded day of rest or a required public assembly. This truth further explains that new moons are NOT holy days, and humanly designed lunar Sabbaths are NOT sanctified by God.

The Significance of the New Moon

Even though the new moon was not designed to determine the weekly Sabbath, it is an important part of our lives. It marks when the months begin. It allows us to know when the annual Feasts are to be observed.

Because the new moon is significant, God required certain offerings to be given by the priests during this time (Num. 29:6). King Saul is also noted to traditionally have a meal with friends and family on the new moon (1Sam. 20:5).

King David reiterated God's command that trumpets should be blown on the new moon, but also wrote that a full moon was an appropriate time to blow the trumpets (Num. 10:10; Psa. 81:3). In addition, the Eternal indicated that the gates of the millennial temple will be open for people to worship on the new moon (Eze. 46:1; Isa. 66:23). However, simply because the new moon is significant, it is not to be elevated in the manner lunar Sabbath proponents teach. Notice the words of Christopher D. Ringwald who wrote an extensive book comparing the Sabbath to other days of worship:

A final conclusion can arise since the weekly Sabbath is mentioned together with the day of the new moon (Isa. 1:13, 66:23, Amos 8:5). But one is weekly and the other every lunar month. The new moon is greeted and blessed to this day as a sign of God's presence and symbol of nature's renewal, but is a separate event (*A Day Apart*, p. 39).

In order to be faithful to God's Word, it must be acknowledged that there is not a single verse stating that God desires His people to keep each new moon as a holy day. The Eternal is always clear and direct when it comes to commanded days of assembly and worship.

As previously shown, with the exception of the annual celebration of Trumpets, there is no command to observe the new moon as if it were a Sabbath (Lev. 23:24). Further, there are no instructions found in holy writ telling God's people to use the new moon as a means to determine the Sabbath. Instead, the Almighty

unequivocally commands us to observe every seventh day. He also requires the observance of His annual Feasts which are the ONLY holy celebrations that have set dates during the month. Despite this undeniable truth, those who practice lunar Sabbaths misrepresent various Scriptures in an attempt to justify their belief.

Numeric Symbolism and the Sabbath

Consider that God uses numbers symbolically in the Scriptures. For example, the number four portrays a foundation on which to build, and seven represents completion.

This symbolism is reflected in the Sabbath which is the fourth commandment occurring on the seventh day of the week. The numbers four and seven represent the fact that the Sabbath is foundational to God's people; and through proper Sabbath observance we learn to become spiritually mature and complete.

With the importance of this day in mind, would God make understanding when to keep the Sabbath complicated? Would He deliberately obscure which day is the Sabbath in the Scriptures? Would He force people to infer and assume its proper observance? According to the lunar Sabbath theory, He does that very thing.

There is not a single verse telling us to count to the seventh day Sabbath from the new moon. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that that we are to only keep the Sabbath on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th of each month. Individuals must infer and take Scriptures out of context in order to make an argument out of thin air in an attempt to justify observing lunar Sabbaths.

Contrary to what lunar Sabbath adherents teach, God's laws are plain and clear. The Eternal does not leave it up to humanity to try and figure out what His statutes and judgments are. When it comes to His days of observance, they are not hidden in vague esoteric references. They are not concealed in God's timing of events that never directly mention lunar Sabbaths. The Almighty spells them out in simple, easy to understand, words.

In Conclusion

Give some serious thought to several simple questions that refute lunar Sabbaths. Did God ever proclaim that we must rest on

the new moon? Does the Bible ever state that we cannot work nor do business on the new moon? Is there a single verse in holy writ telling us that we must have a holy convocation on every new moon?

Does the Bible say that God's people must count weekly Sabbaths starting from the day after the new moon? Did God ever declare that His holy Sabbath must be kept specifically on the 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th, of each month? Does He state that the day of the new moon must not be counted when determining the first Sabbath of each month? Does He explain that the days after the final Sabbath in a month are not to be counted? In every case the answer is a resounding NO!

The process of observing lunar Sabbaths may sound confusing to many, and rightly so. The arguments for its observance are convoluted and difficult to comprehend. Adherents of this false doctrine say that it is God's command to keep lunar Sabbaths even though there is not a single Scripture validating their claim. They read a handful of verses that mention the 15th day of the month and assume they refer to lunar Sabbaths, but none of their supposed proof is true. They quote texts written by so-called scholars and unbelievers who assert that the weekly Sabbath was originally anchored to the new moon. After examining their "evidence," the Eternal Church of God has found that all such statements are made with no tangible proof. In fact, the historical records show the exact opposite.

The truth about lunar Sabbaths is that they are not based on God's Word. There is no decree for such a practice found anywhere in the Bible. It is a false doctrine built upon abnormally complex conjecture, inference and assumption. Instead of being a commandment of God, lunar Sabbaths are the machinations of men. To this, the Savior warned:

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with the lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9).

Those who might be considering the validity of lunar Sabbaths should consider what is honest and true both doctrinally and historically. Consider what the Scriptures actually, and literally, state. Lunar Sabbaths do not honor God. Instead of obeying the Almighty, and connecting with Him on His chosen day of rest, lunar Sabbaths cause believers to disobey God and lose a vital sign between God and His people (Exo. 31:13). It is the Eternal Church of God's hope that everyone who is called will prove all things and hold fast only to what is good (1Ths. 5:21).

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

The Calendar Controversy

The Sabbath Test

Satan's Fate

The Truth about Heaven

The Magnificent Meaning of God's Holy Days

The Truth about Tithing

A Good and Faithful Servant

Three Times a Year

The Unclean and the Clean

Understanding the Mark of the Beast

Keys to Understanding Revelation

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